



# HARTFORD STREET ZEN CENTER

57 Hartford Street San Francisco, California 94114 Telephone: 415/863-2507

## Newsletter

### October/November/December 1989

*It is with a great sense of love and gratitude for all our teachers that we congratulate Issan on his receiving Teaching Transmission from his teacher, Zentatsu Richard Baker-roshi in July at Dharma Sangha in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The following is reprinted from the most recent Dharma Sangha Newsletter.*

### The Teaching Transmission Ceremony

Baker-roshi has just finished Issan Dorsey's Teaching Transmission. Issan and Roshi have been working together for about two years on teachings related to the Transmission ceremony. The formal ceremony itself, which includes periods of practice and teaching, lasts seven days. Although for several years Issan has been teaching with Baker-roshi's permission, leading the Hartford Street Zen Center in San Francisco, and creating Maitri, A Home and Hospice for People Living with AIDS, this Teaching Transmission means that Issan now has formal and full authority to teach, to accept students and to perform ordination and all other ceremonies. Issan already has students preparing for ordination.

Poet Zenshin Philip Whalen, who received Teaching Transmission from Baker-roshi in July 1987, works with Issan taking care of the practice and teaching at the Hartford Street Zen Center and at Maitri. Philip came with Issan from San Francisco to help Roshi in the completion of Issan's Transmission. While the three of them met together, the Santa Fe students pitched in with preparing meals and helping things go smoothly.

In the middle of the sixth day, Namkhai Norbu-rinpoche showed up for a visit. Roshi knows him from Europe and likes and admires him. They all had lunch together. Dan Welch, who was Roshi's assistant for preparing Transmission materials in the past, appeared also. It is unusual to have visitors during the seven days of the Transmission ceremony, but in this case it seemed auspicious and supportive. We had planned the ceremony for the Crestone center which is completely isolated, but

Issan was too ill to handle the altitude of 8,600 feet or to drive three or four hours in a car. So although we were more accessible to visitors, the Santa Fe center turned out to be a wonderful place to do the main teachings and ceremony. The white chorten/stupa, the adobe courtyard and the four trees just glowed in the full moon light. Issan gave the public lecture in the Zendo on Sunday, July 16. He told us about the practice and program at their Center and Hospice. Issan feels profoundly accepting and grateful to the disease he has for the compassion, insight, resolution and calmness it has brought to his life--and the connection and closeness to everyone it has given him. He has a vow he says every day and whenever he hears someone has been diagnosed as having AIDS: "I vow with all beings to settle in ultimate closeness with you and every person and continue our dialogue there."

Baker-roshi commented that, "understanding, realization and wisdom arise from necessity. 'Wisdom' and understanding are not casually realized just 'in the course of things' or through curiosity or simply gained with age, they are hard won, realized through experience and impermanence. The vow 'to realize with and thus to save all sentient beings' is a precondition for all Buddhist practice and the culmination and necessity of mature practice." For Issan and Baker-roshi the Transmission Ceremony was inseparable from Issan's illness.

It was lovely at least having Issan and Phil practicing in our Zendo again--we wish they could stay forever--but there are too many people waiting for them to come back to San Francisco.

### Mountain Seat Ceremony

A traditional and formal ceremony for Issan Dorsey's installation as Abbot of the Hartford Street Zen Center is scheduled for November 4th.

Tough lips that cannot quite make the sounds of love  
The language  
Has so misshaped them.

We is an intimate  
pronoun which shifts its context  
almost as the eye blinks at it.

--Jack Spicer



## Altar Flowers and IXIA

Gary Weiss is a founding member of HSZC and a member of the board of directors. He generously provides the elegant and sophisticated flower arrangements that grace the main altar in the zendo.

Gary's interest in gardening and flowers began in 1971 when he was living at San Francisco Zen Center on Page Street. He discovered the roof garden in a sad state of benevolent neglect and determined to create something new. In 1972 he planted the wisteria which now covers the front of the building. That year Gary moved to the newly acquired Green Gulch Farm where he became one of the first groundskeepers. He hiked in the hills around Green Gulch and soon knew where to find beautiful wild flowers, some of which became offerings on the altars there.

Rather than going to Tassajara as Baker-roshi had suggested, Gary decided to return to San Francisco to open a plant store out in the Avenues. That was in 1975. In 1983 he opened IXIA. Gary's business grew and evolved into what it is today--a very distinctive establishment. IXIA is a refreshing change from the usual flower shop. One corner of the store is filled with dried pods, leaves, vines and a large assortment of Japanese rocks. Another area is all orchids, another timber bamboo, and flowers from Hawaii, Australia and New Zealand throughout. One wall is covered with hundreds of baskets and another is stacked to the ceiling with Japanese vases.

Regarding his design approach, Gary remarks, "I've always liked the unusual. I started with a good sense of color and texture. I helped take care of Suzuki-roshi's bonsai trees while living at Green Gulch. Learning to train bonsai was a big help in learning flower design. But sitting had what was probably the most profound effect. Zazen sessions have at times become few and far between, but zazen has contributed to every arrangement that has been made at the shop."

*IXIA is located in San Francisco at 2331 Market Street near Noe.*

---Niki Rothman



## Tibetan Healing Ritual

On Sunday, November 12, at 2:00 pm, the San Francisco Zen Center will host an event entitled *Healing and Transformation in Buddhist Tantra*, a performance of an ancient monastic healing ritual by highly qualified Tibetan monks. The monks come from the Gaden Shartse Monastery in India, one of the oldest seats of Tibetan monastic learning, as part of a US tour.

The ritual performance (the first such performance outside of Tibet to public audiences) will be centered on Medicine Buddha and will include: preparatory rites of ablation; empowerment to perform the Medicine Buddha visualization along with the monks; a wrathful ritual for overcoming forces of untimely death; Choed meditation for cutting off self-grasping; a self-empowerment ritual to allow the monks to generate themselves as the deity; the Dance of the Dakinis for life enhancement; and the Yultued rite for purifying the site and balancing the elements of nature. The performance will include the use of traditional liturgical instruments, chanting and mudras.

Because of the nature of the event, those who are suffering from physical or mental pain and illness are especially invited to attend.

Since this tour is to raise badly needed funds for their home monastery, there will be a suggested donation of \$15, payable at the door.

## HSZC Financial Report

Membership contributions to HSZC now total \$650 per month. The center is currently operating with a \$400 monthly deficit. As a result of the appeal for donations which you received with the last newsletter, we were finally able to tear down our decrepit old back porch and replace it with a new and improved, larger model. An interior staircase now links the first floor of the hospice building with the basement level office so that people no longer have to go outside to reach the office. Also, the zendo floor has been repaired and shored up from below. Thanks to Shunko Michael Jamvold for overseeing these projects. And a grateful gassho to all who responded to the appeal for donations, without which none of these vital repairs could have been accomplished. The cost of the renovations came to over \$10,000, and as of the beginning of September we have received \$2,600 in donations which may be applied to pay for them. We are also using funds from the refinancing of 57 Hartford Street to help pay for these projects. We hope that all those who have not donated anything up to this point will give something now. Thank You.





## HSZC News

*The Hartford Street Zen Center and our Maitri Hospice Program exist only through the help and support of members and friends. Your generosity makes it possible for HSZC to exist as a Buddhist practice center and to continue working to provide an environment of service and care for people living with AIDS.*

A warm welcome to new volunteers Helen Ironmonger, Kirk Phillips, Marian Spotsgood, Mark Sykes, Steven Nicholas, Webster Penney, Mike Gray, Wilton Woods, Mark Willner, Joachin Padilla and Vic Bassewitz. Deep appreciation goes to longtime volunteers Kevin Hall, Sharon Kehoe, Michael Ferri, Jacques Achsen, George Stevens, and Bob Roush.

Paul Higley is assuming the position of head doan. He will be training people to become jiko, chiden or doan--carrying incense, maintaining the zendo, chanting and watching the time during zazen. Please contact Paul if you would like to learn.

Longtime Maitri resident J.D. Kobezak, whose need for help transformed the idea of Maitri into reality almost two years ago, was feeling well enough to move into his own apartment earlier this summer. Since then he has returned to Florida to be with his family. J.D. has had some health problems lately, but we're told he is receiving excellent care.

The last three months have seen the deaths of four Maitri Hospice residents. It was a great privilege to help care for Rob Dontas, James Barnes, Joel Kleiman, and Richard Vincent. Although they were only with us a short time, all our lives were enriched with their presence.

Maitri director Kijun Steve Allen and Angelique Farrow have returned from a five week trip to the south of France where they visited with the Venerable Thich Nhat-Hanh, Vietnamese monk and peace activist, at Plum Village.

On Sunday, July 30th Issan, with the assistance of HSZC director David Bullock and head doan Paul Higley, conducted an affirmation of union ceremony in the zendo for domestic partners Mark Sykes and Bill Fike, during which they received traditional Buddhist precepts.

August was the annual interim period for HSZC. There were no classes, lectures, or public events. The daily zazen schedule was maintained. The regular schedule of classes and public events including the Sunday morning program resumed September first.

Sojun Mel Weitsman, Abbot of the Berkeley Zen Center and Co-Abbot of the San Francisco Zen Center visited in August. Issan and Zenshin gave him a tour, which included the hospice building, then everyone who was on hand enjoyed tea with them.

On August 21 Gigi Sims of the Living Buddha Project came and took photographs of daily life activities at HSZC. The living Buddha project is producing a major exhibition of photographs of Buddhist activity in North America today. An exhibit of the images will travel throughout the US, Canada and the Asian Pacific rim for the two years following publication. This exhibit will

document the recent historical phenomenon of Buddhist culture and aesthetics beginning to enter into and exert an influence on contemporary American life. A catalog of the exhibit, with commentary, will be published by Shambhala Publications.

Venerable Suhita Dharma visited HSZC the last week in August. He is a disciple of the late Dr. Thich Thien-An. Rev. Suhita Dharma has been operating Metta Vihara, a hospice caring for six people living with AIDS in Richmond, California. He offered incense in the zendo and visited with Maitri hospice residents. Issan commented that it meant a great deal to meet someone like Rev. Suhita Dharma who is doing essentially the same work as we are.

Dhammadinna, a senior teacher with the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order, visited HSZC in September. She is from Great Britain and was visiting the Bay Area to lecture at SF Zen Center and Green Gulch Farm as part of a journey across the US.

September 21-24 Issan and Kijun Steve Allen joined Joan Halifax at the Ojai Foundation to conduct a mindfulness retreat. The retreat focused on non-violence, equanimity and non-duality.

On October 24th, Issan will visit with Sister Marty, Brother Toby, Sister Julie and the caregivers at the Star Cross Community in Santa Rosa. Star Cross Community is a group home for babies with AIDS and provides support for people caring for children with AIDS.

Kijun Steve Allen and Angelique Farrow will be traveling to South Africa in December to visit and practice with a group of people whom Steve has helped to establish as a small zen center.



### Ordinations

Three students are currently sewing okesa--traditional robes--in preparation for priest ordination. We are also planning to hold Jukai, or lay ordination ceremony, for several of our students who are working on rakasu, the abbreviated "Buddha's robe" which is worn around the neck. We are grateful to Shunpo Blanche Hartman and Lin Kanshin Zenki for their guidance and support, teaching us to "sew with heart" and to say "Namu Kye Butsu" (I take refuge in the Buddha) with each stitch.

### Author's Query

Tensho David Schneider is seeking to write a biography of Issan Dorsey. He is currently soliciting everyone's favorite stories about Issan. If this project interests you, and you can help, please contact Tensho at (415) 548-1910; 1331 Oxford Street, Berkeley, CA, 94709.

### Rohatsu Sitting

From December 8th to the 10th there will be a Rohatsu sitting to commemorate Shakyamuni Buddha's enlightenment. We will start the sitting on Friday evening with two periods of zazen beginning at 8:00 pm. The sitting continues through Saturday and Sunday. There will also be a Sunday morning lecture at 10:00 am. Everyone is invited to attend. Fees for the sitting are \$30 for members and \$40 for non-members. Please sign up early and make arrangements to stay overnight if necessary.

### Segaki Ceremony

On December 16th we will hold our annual Segaki Ceremony and Pot Luck Social. Segaki is a traditional Buddhist ceremony to call forth spirits of those who have died during the previous year in order to remember and honor them, and let go--helping them to enter the great realm of

realization. A fire ritual concludes the ceremony in which cards bearing the names of those who have died are burned. Tea is at 4 pm; the ceremony at 5 pm, with dinner following.

### New Year's Eve

We will celebrate New Year's Eve 1990 with a quiet ceremony in the zendo and then sit zazen as the bell slowly rings 108 times. Afterward, there will be an informal reception with sake. Everyone is invited. Please be in the zendo by 11:00 pm.

### New Year's Day Annual Members' Brunch

On New Year's Day we hope all members will join us for the festive Annual Members' Brunch prepared by Greens Restaurant alumnus David Bullock. Zazen begins at 9 am; brunch follows from 11 am to 1 pm. Please RSVP.

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## Special Events Calendar

Sunday	October 8	One Day Sitting, 5:00 am to 5:00 pm.
Tuesday	October 10	Lecture, 8:00 pm, speaker to be announced. Donation requested.
Friday	October 13	Full Moon Bodhisattva Ceremony, 6:40 pm.
Sunday	November 12	One Day Sitting, 5:00 am to 5:00 pm.
Monday	November 13	Full Moon Bodhisattva Ceremony, 6:40 pm.
Tuesday	November 14	Lecture, 8:00 pm, speaker to be announced. Donation requested.
Tuesday	December 5	Lecture, 8:00 pm, speaker to be announced. Donation requested.
Friday	December 8	Ceremony commemorating Buddha's enlightenment, at the time of morning service.
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Saturday	December 16	Segaki Ceremony and Pot Luck Dinner, 4:00 pm.
Sunday	December 31	New Year's Eve Sitting--108 bells, 11:00 pm.
Monday	January 1	Annual New Year's Day Members' Brunch. Zazen, 9:00 am, Brunch 11:00 am-1:00 pm.

*Please note there will be no zazen on Thanksgiving or Christmas.*

## Tenshin-Reb Anderson Visits HSZC

On June 27th we were honored by a visit from Tenshin Reb Anderson, Co-Abbot of the San Francisco Zen Center on Page Street. Over the years, Tenshin-sensei has always been a friend and supporter of HSZC. It was a pleasure for all of us to re-connect with him again. Because of his busy schedule he hadn't had a chance to visit in a while and he had not yet seen the hospice building. Issan and Steve gave him a tour and warmly introduced him to everybody. Then we all sat down in the living room for tea and conversation.

Tenshin-sensei kindly responded to students' questions, which ranged from how to stay awake during zazen, to the nature of suffering. About suffering, he suggested, "There's two kinds of suffering. One is a sense of loss of something magnificent, a yearning for some radical simplicity--a real innocence--yearning for that and at the same time being in a realm that isn't the realm of innocence where you're also getting battered around. Those are different types of suffering, but they coexist because in this realm you have that feeling, and so in this realm we practice and by practicing in the proper way we stop the cause of this suffering which is clinging to the self....So it's a circle. Again, zazen is about all that. So that's why we sit and when we're sitting in silence, we're integrating these two realms."

## Maitri Update

In August, Maitri residents and volunteers enjoyed several days at a resort on the Russian River.

We are pleased to report that the Maitri Home and Hospice for People Living with AIDS has received a \$5,000 grant from the Tides Foundation and a \$25,000 grant from the Northern California Grant-makers AIDS Task Force. We are using these funds in part to construct a handicapped access bathroom and an additional bedroom in the hospice building.

These grants contribute significantly towards the \$80,000 needed this year to operate the Hospice Program. What really makes Maitri work however, are individual contributions made by people who believe in this work, not major grants. It's people giving from their hearts that has allowed Maitri to become a reality.

Maitri is a community of people working together, who are making this project happen. We are encouraged by the many people who have come forth to help, and appreciate their ongoing support. Help continues to be needed at all levels and is within everybody's capability.

Donations to Maitri are tax-deductable. If you are interested in volunteering please call Volunteer Coordinator Niki Rothman at 861-6779.

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## Weekly Schedule

**Sunday:** Informal period of zazen at 9:00 am, lecture 10:00 am, followed by discussion and tea. The morning ends with 15 minute soji (zendo cleaning), donation requested.

**Monday:** Zazen orientation for newcomers, 5:00 pm. If you cannot attend at this time please call and make an appointment with Paul Higley.

**Tuesday:** "Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind". This class is reading and discussing the landmark anthology of Suzuki-roshi's lectures. Taught by Zenshin-Philip Whalen, 8:00 pm.

**Fees:** There is a charge of \$5.00 per evening for classes. Your tuition is a donation to the Hartford Street Zen Center. Both courses are on-going. You can drop in for single classes without pre-registering.

**Wednesday:** Shanti Support Group, 7:00 pm.

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## HARTFORD STREET ZEN CENTER

### Daily Schedule

*Monday through Friday:*

Zazen	6:00 am
Interval	6:25 am
Zazen	6:30 am
Service	6:55 am

Zazen	6:00 pm
Service	6:40 pm

### Zendo Protocol

Please arrive five minutes early and get well settled before the period begins. Be as quiet as possible and walk very softly, bowing as you enter the sitting area and when crossing in front of the altar.

When you reach your seat bow towards it with hands together in gassho, then turn clockwise and bow facing outward before sitting down. When the bell rings at the end of the period bow with your hands in gassho, fluff your zafu cushion, bow towards your seat and then away from it. If you are not staying for service leave as quietly as possible, bowing as you pass the altar. After the service, stand at your place until the Doan (time-keeper) bows, then follow the person furthest from the door out of the zendo.

It is suggested that you wear dark, loose fitting clothing--pants or a long skirt, but not shorts--and that you do not wear socks when sitting. Once you are seated and the bell has rung, please make your best effort not to move or make noise.

### Dokusan (practice interviews)

Both Issan and Zenshin Philip Whalen are available to discuss your practice or to answer students' questions. Please make appointments in advance.